

A
SERMON
Preached before the
KING,
On *Easter-Day*, 1684.

By Francis ^{Turner} Lord Bishop of *Rocheſter*,
and ALMONER to His
MAJESTY.

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to His moſt Sacred Maſteſty, at the *Angel*
in *Amen-Corner*, 1684.

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Hosea VI. 2, 3.

After two days will He revive us, in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord : his going forth is prepared as the morning ; and He shall come unto us as the rain ; as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

SUCH an August and Solemn Assembly as this, how well does it suit with those Glorious Titles the Ancient Fathers bestow upon Easter-Day, *the Feast of Feasts, the Solemnity of Solemnities, the Queen or Empress of all the Churches Festivals !* And well may the Christian Church be allowed to pay the highest observance and greatest reverence to the memory of his Resurrection, *Whom God hath raised up to be a Prince, and a Saviour, (as St. Peter styles Him) to be our God, and our Lord (as Saint Thomas calls him) ;* when even the Gentile World, whom ever they took upon them to worship as a God, their natural Religion dictated to them this, *That Feasts in Honour of*

A Sermon Preached

Him should be observed. The Roman Emperour *Tiberius* (as *Eusebius* relates) upon that amazing Story he received from his Lieutenant *Pontius Pilate*, concerning our Saviours Death and Resurrection, was very desirous to have Deified our Lord Christ: But by the special Providence of God, the Senate found a pretence to cross that Design of *Tiberius*; for Christ would never be beholding to the Secular Heathen Powers to advance his Divinity, which was to astonish the World into its belief by a quite contrary method, of suffering their Persecutions, and dying for it.

But since all the Triumphs of Christ, that were the consequence of his Death and Passion, began from his Resurrection, (*Because he was obedient unto death, even the death upon the Cross, therefore God also hath highly exalted him; again, God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ; which implies, that Christ was made more The Christ, that is, more The Anointed Son of God, by his being the first-begotten from the dead this Day;*) then we must needs allow this Day a preference to all others in our Christian Calendar: This is foretold, *As the Day of his Power, when the people should offer him free-will Offerings with an holy worship; when he was first enabled*

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abled to declare; *All power is given unto me in Heaven and earth*; This is the Day which Christ has call'd properly *His*, *Father Abraham desired to see my Day, and he saw it, and was glad to see it*, then when he received *Isaac from the dead in a Figure, a Type of Christ*. This is the Day which the Lord hath made: I could alledge a great consent of the Antients interpreting that Passage of the Psalmist, as Prophetical of Easter-Day; a Festival that we hear of in as old a Record, and as venerable a Piece of Antiquity, as is the Story of *Polycarp, St. John's Disciple*; a Festival, which *Constantine*, the first Great Christian Emperour, commanded by a special Edict to be observed; which *Socrates* our Ecclesiastical Historian assures us, that in his time no Hereticks had impudence enough to disparage, nay, that all of them kept it. Now methinks 'tis exceeding strange, that so many of our Schismatics should have so much zeal as they pretend to have for the Weekly Festival, and none for the Annual Commemoration of our Blessed Lords Resurrection; that the Lords Day being confessedly derived from this Day, every Sunday but as a shadow of Easter: Yet some almost Judaizing in the Doctrine of the Sabbath, should refuse to join with the rest of the

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the Christian World in honouring of this Day, whence the other one and fifty Days in the Year had all their beginning, and borrow all their Glory. But as for you that come hither on the score of Devotion, I may address myself to you, as the Angel began to those that had the honour to hear the first welcome News of this Day, *Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, that was crucified; He is risen.* The Christian Saints of old, when they met upon Easter-Morning, the one accosted the other with this Salutation, *Christ is risen*; the Custom still continues in the Greek Churches, to which the other joyfully echoes and replies, *Yes, Christ is risen*: But I will not say with the Angel, *Ye seek Jesus, He is not here*; Indeed he was no longer there in his Monument, but he is here in the Blessed Sacrament, which shall be in the worthy Receivers as, *Seeds of the Resurrection*, ('tis Irenæus's expression) to make our vile Bodies like his glorious Body; and he is here in the Text, as I shall clearly shew, though it were but an obscure Prophecy to the Jews, as every Prophecy is a Mystery till it be fulfilled; yet now 'tis turn'd into the plain Story of this time; to us Christians 'tis a demonstration, if it pleases Christ to open our hearts, as he did those of the two Disciples that went
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to *Emmaus*, when he expounded unto them in all the *Scriptures*, and all the *Prophets*, the things concerning himself, That *Christ* ought to have suffered those things, and to enter into his *Glory*: for unless he open our eyes, as he did theirs while he opened the *Scriptures* to them, we may be but as they were, slow of heart to believe all that the *Prophets* have spoken.

Saint Paul, who tells some parts of this Story concerning the *Resurrection* more punctually than even the *Gospels* have done, tells us, that *Christ* rose the third Day, according to the *Scriptures*. The *Resurrection* is the only Article of our *Creed* that has the circumstance of time particularly annexed to it; and this he says was according to the *Scriptures*, that *Christ* rose the third Day: Which are those *Scriptures* then? For he must needs mean those in the *Old Testament*; and which are those? None more plain than this place of *Hosea*; which therefore I have chosen to discourse upon, though it be not so commonly observed, and though it be left for an exercise of our *Christian Industry*, which should be much employ'd in searching the *Scriptures*, for this is a Text not quoted in any place of the *New Testament*: Yet I shall not deny, but this *Prophecy* might also signify

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fie that *reviving* or *restoring* of Gods people
 from their woful Captivity, in which they
 were, as it were, *dead men and dry bones*, (as the
 Prophet *Ezekiel* calls them;) Recovering their
 Liberty was like receiving new life, after *those*
two days, or two calamitous times, first of the
 Assyrian Captivity, then of the Babylonian;
 and then a third glorious Day broke out joyful
 and happy to them, upon the Victories and
 Triumphs of the Great *Cyrus*, (whom the
 Prophet *Isaiah* calls by his Name some Ages
 before he was born, *Who hath said unto Cyrus,*
Thou art my Shepherd); accordingly *Cyrus* took order
 for *gathering the scattered sheep of Israel*, for
 raising them up from a kind of Civil Death,
 from Slavery to Freedom, from Banishment
 to resettle them in their own Country. But al-
 lowing this Interpretation of the Text in its
 first literal meaning, it does not follow but a
 higher sense should be put upon the words;
 the Fathers and learned Antients contend with
 one voice, that *Christ is here*, that his plenteous
 Redemption, his gracious releasing us from the
 Death of sin, his raising us to the Life of
 Grace, of Righteousness and of Glory, were
 prefigured and typified by that restauration and
 temporal deliverance of the *Jews*: 'Tis
 Christ,

Christ, whose *going forth from the bosome of the Father* into the World, is said in my Text to be *prepared as the Morning*, prepared of God by his ever-fixt and never-failing Decree ; by the *determinate counsel and foreknowledge* of God, the very Days of Christ's Incarnation, his Birth, and his Resurrection, were appointed set-days, as certain to come, as they were surely expected by *those that waited for the consolation of Israel*, who should no more be disappointed in their expectation, than those that lookt for the constant returns of the Morning-light ; and this Day of his was to be *as the Morning, as the Day-spring from on high*, to dispel the darkness by the presence of his Light ; to disperse the Fumes, that from ignorance and sin, with its mortal effects, had so long clouded the minds of men ; to dilate and spread over all the World the influence of his heavenly Doctrine, both of Grace and Glory : and as he is likened to *the Light*, so he is also set forth in my Text by that other great Blessing from Heaven upon Earth, *the Rain*, *And he shall come unto us as the Rain* ; so says the Psalmist, *He shall come down like the Rain into a Fleece of Wool*, so gentle, so refreshing, and so fructifying, even as the drops that water the earth ; an Emblem of Christ that *Isaiah*

lights to use, *Drop down ye heavens from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness.* But there is something more implied in his *Coming unto us* as the latter and former rain unto the earth : For in that part of the Earth, the Holy Land, that *flow'd with milk and honey*, it was one of their Blessings, that these Rains came at set-times and seasons, not so uncertainly as in these Parts of the World ; but the *former rain* about the time of *sowing their Seed*, the *latter rain* about this very time, in the Spring : And if Christ be there compared to that former Autumnal, and this latter Easter Rain, 'tis easie from our own thoughts to draw out the parallel, That He came *like the former Rain* at his holy Nativity, and *like the latter Rain* at his new Birth, for so His Resurrection is called and thus compared, as well as His Eternal Generation, *The Dawn of thy Birth is as the Womb of the Morning.*

The Words being thus explain'd, I may prosecute the Design of them either of these two ways, as there are two methods of handling any Article of the Christian Faith : for Example, this of the Resurrection may be treated of, either, first, in an Historical way, considering the Matter of Fact it self that makes up the Article ; so in my Text this Matter of
Fact

Fact is supposed, that Christ revived after two days, or was rais'd up again the third day.

Secondly, The Article may be enquired into, as it is a Mystery of Faith, or as it contains the Effects, the consequence of these great things that Christ either acted or suffered for us, so the power of his Resurrection (as St. Paul calls it) is also set down in these words, *He shall revive us, He shall raise us up again, and we shall live in his sight : He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.*

But thirdly, Here is an Obligation upon our parts, or a Condition imposed upon us : if we mean to reap advantage from this revealed Doctrine of Christ's Resurrection and ours ; then must these Principles be pursued extremely home, and we must go on throughout the whole course of our lives to practise accordingly, *Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.*

First then I shall consider the Matter of Fact that makes up the Article of Faith, as it is contained in this glorious Prophecy, and in some others like it. For *the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy*, says St. John the Apostle ; and it was a great and just Appeal that the Prophet

Isaiah made against Idols, and their false Prophets, *Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Gods.* Now if ever things to come were plainly and distinctly shewed long before, these so important Transactions relating to our Saviours Passion and Resurrection were written as with a Sun-Beam, were translated out of Hebrew into Greek by the Command of a Heathen Prince, but by Gods special Providence, some Ages before their Completion; Whose voice could it be, if not his that was before *David*, who spake it in his behalf, *They pierced my hands and my feet?* Who was so pierced, but he, with the Nails on his Cross? *I may tell all my Bones*, as it follows there: Could there be a more proper description of that Distortion he suffered during his Extension upon the cursed Tree? 'Tis as naturally painted out in *Isai. 25.* another of the four Evangelists, (as I may call the four Great Prophets) of the Old Testament *And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth, spreadeth forth his hands to swim;* that the very Price should be set down beforehand, the goodly price at which they valu'd him, and what they should do with it, *Buy the Field of Bloud;* then that every circumstance of his Death should be

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so punctually foretold, the very words they should contemptuously speak in the midst of his Passion, *He trusted in God that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, if he will have him.* The words stood a long time before, where they stand now, in the 22th Psalm, the Passion-Psalm; there you may also find the Souldiers parting his Garments among them, and casting lots for his seemless Coat: It looks more like a History than a Prophecy; yet Greece from the Septuagint attests the words, as well as does Judæa from the Original. *That there should be darknes over the earth, and the Sun should not give its light; they had warning of it, Amos 8. 9. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the Sun to go down at Noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day.* Why, there were many Eclipses, say the Jews: Not one, by their good favour, when the Moon was at Full; as it was always when they kept their Passover; and yet this prodigious Darkness is witnessed by several Heathen Writers of undoubted credit. For the time when all this should come to pass, *that Messiah the Prince should be cut off, and to make an end of transgression,* 'tis so exactly set down in the Prophecy of Weeks in Daniel, that I may call that Prophecy a perfect Gospel.

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The very time of Lent, of fasting and mourning for our sins, is expressly predetermined (as I may say) in the Prophecy of *Zechariah*, chap. 12. ver. 10, 11. applied by the Apostle directly to the passion of our Lord, *They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only Son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born: In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the Valley of Megiddo:* But that mourning in Jerusalem certainly was for that excellent King *Josiah*, an undoubted Type of Christ; And since it is here foretold, that the Church of Christ, the true Jerusalem, should so mourn for Christ as the Jews did for *Josiah*, it follows forcibly, That as the mourning for *Josiah* was an annual or yearly Solemnity; so ours for Christ must be: and so is our Good-Friday, and indeed the whole Great Week, as 'tis usually styl'd, before this Capital Feast in memory of his Resurrection.

As for his Resurrection it self, what Prediction more plain and clear than the Text in the 16th Psalm, on which St. Peter made his Sermon, *Acts* 2. on which St. Paul preach'd, *Acts* 13. *Therefore my heart* [Christ's heart] *was glad, and*
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my glory rejoyced ; my flesh also shall rest in hope : for why ? Thou shalt not leave my soul in Hell, neither shalt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. Who- ever can but say his Creed, may in that Verse find most of the prime Articles of the Christian Faith, the Death and Burial of Christ, his De- scending into Hell, his rising again from the Dead ; to which if my Text be added, After two days he will revive us, in the third day he will raise us up ; then what is wanting in this Con- fession, that we ought to believe as Funda- mental in the Doctrine of the Resurrection ? Some indeed think themselves most learned when they can shew these Prophecies literally fulfill'd in the Types of Christ, as this in Da- vid himself. Be it so ; but yet says the Apo- stle, David saw corruption ; implying strongly, that it was applicable to David in so poor and so low a sense, it could hardly be so applied ; that even according to the Letter (as we say) it was more truly, as well as more gloriously ac- complish'd in Christ the Son of David. To tell you the worst thought that can arise in an unbelieving heart : It has been thought by some, or said at least, That some Enthusiastick Spirits writ these strange things, we call the Pro- phesies of the Old Testament ; and then some others

others, either as much transported with devout Phancies, or else far engaged in design, to set up a new Divinity, have adapted those Characters, and alluded from these seeming Predictions to such and such Passages in the Life and Death of Christ; which Passages either they really credited in pious ignorance, or cunningly pretended to do so: But if we consider how undeniably prov'd are these Matters of Fact in the Story of Christ, that answer to those Prophecies, then I hope all is firm, then the *Foundation of God is sure*. Now 'tis too short an expression to say we have the same assurance of the truth of these things in the Life of Christ, as of any thing in the Life of *Alexander the Great*, whose Victories and Monarchy were foretold, and shew'd him in the Prophecy of *Daniel*; had we none but *Quintus Curtius*, and the other Heathen Writers of the Greek Story, we had reason enough to believe there was such a Conqueror as *Alexander*, because indifferent persons have recorded it, such as liv'd so near his time, they could not be deceived, nor could they have any interest to deceive us; this may create a Humane Faith, that 'tis morally impossible such a Matter of Fact should be false: But we have more reason by far to give

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give credit to things attested by such persons as are mightily concerned and engaged by their Party to gainsay them. Now 'tis the peculiar strength of the Christian Faith, that two Parties which hate it most, I mean the Jews and the Heathens, do very strongly support it, and prove it against their Wills: For the Jews confess and contend that such Prophecies as these were left them, nay the most learned Jewish Doctors, Ancient and Modern, interpret most of these Prophecies to concern their Messiah, whom they expected to come, and to suffer many things, though not Death. But then our other Adversaries, the Heathens, *Celsus* and *Julian*, and the rest, cannot but acknowledge many of Christ's Miracles, though most unreasonably they impute them to his skill in some forbidden Arts: And for those Miracles which they are loth to confess; yet they dare not deny, but his Followers dy'd to attest, not only their constancy to such a belief, (for so have Jews and Heathens done) but to attest such Matters of Fact as they had seen with their eyes, as well as such Matters of Faith once delivered to the Saints; and such Evidence as this, impossible not to be true, must be allow'd as sufficient to found a Divine Faith, upon which

the Church is built, as upon a Rock, and the Gates of Hell shall never prevail against it.

For, first, I suppose that if Christ wrought such Miracles, and rose from the Dead, and gave his Apostles like power to raise the Dead; then all that believe a God and his Providence, must admit the whole Christian Faith. For Miracles, and especially raising the Dead, are the Great Seals which God keeps in his own hands, to set to his Truth when he sees occasion. If the Devil himself were able to raise the Dead, why has he never done so, once at least, after the Executioner has done his Office dextrously upon some one of his faithful Servants? He has had above 1600. Years to try, but could never shake Christianity, as he might have done by raising the Dead; so as the act might have born the Test of a fair and full Examination.

Secondly, Then I suppose it possible for men of common sense to be infallibly sure of some notable and very remarkable Matter of Fact, which they all believe, and think that they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and their hands handle at the same time. For if we cannot be sure of so much as this comes to, then we may all be dead men, or no men, but
beasts,

beasts, for any thing we can discern: But if we can be certain of thus much, then we must allow it as possible for those who pretended to have seen Christ raised from the Dead, to be as infallibly certain that they were not mistaken.

Thirdly, I suppose it very possible for some Matter of Fact that was not seen with ones own eyes, (suppose it be done in the next room) to be so undeniably witnessed, as shall abundantly supply the want of ocular demonstration.

Lastly, I assume, That if we can be sure of any Matter of Fact which we did not see with our own eyes, then we may be infinitely surer of the wonderful Works of Christ, and especially of his Glorious Resurrection; That Christ was openly crucified, or nailed to a Cross before a multitude of Enemies; That after exquisite pains, he gave up the Ghost; Then to make all sure, That he was thrust into the vital parts, that the water gush'd out of his side; without which Cooler he must needs have been parch'd to death, if he had not undergone many deaths before: that the Apostle St. John, who saw this, with many others *bare record*; That *their record is true*; That the Enemies of Christianity knew it to be so uncon-

troulably true (as to the point of his Dying) that scarce any Jew or Heathen has ever been so impudent as to deny the certainty of his Death; That this extraordinary Person, so publicly executed, was closed and sealed up in a Sepulchre, and his Body guarded by Orders thus strictly issued forth, *Ye have a Watch, go make it as sure as you can*; That after three days he appeared alive again in the same Body; That he appeared several times, in divers places, to many Spectators at once, to above five hundred Persons; That he had threatned his Foes beforehand, that he would unbar the Gates of Death, let them do what they could to debar or hinder him; for it was their own Deposition before Pontius Pilate himself, Sir, *we remember that this Deceiver said while he lived, The third day I will rise again*: That he provok'd some that believed not for joy, and some that obstinately disbelieved, to feel his Pulse, to *handle and see the print of the nails*, and to *thrust their hands into his side*, till the most incredulous man assented whether he would or no; These Matters of Fact were immediately proclaim'd and preach'd to all the World, by such Eye-Witnesses every where, as not only were ready to seal it with their blood, That this Testimony

mony of theirs was true ; but God also set to his Seal, That many of those who were ready thus to lay down their lives, and who took it upon their deaths, that they saw Christ raised from the Dead, should themselves be enabled to work undeniable Miracles, and even to raise the Dead. No wonder then if the Gospel spread so fast : For if a man of God (how contemptible soever) should revive but one Malefactor after he had been openly put to death, it would not be many Months e're the whole World would have an account of it.

But then their working of Miracles, as a demonstration that their Witness was most true, who affirmed they had seen Christ risen, comes to be as unquestionably asserted by many other Eye-Witnesses, and by so many others that had it from the mouths of these, they made up a Noble Army of Martyrs, who lov'd not their lives in comparison of this Truth which they advanc'd by their deaths, *viz.* That they had seen the Apostles or Apostolical men *confirming the Word, by Signs following.*

And lastly, That there were such a Glorious Company of Martyrs, such as endured a thousand indignities, (and, as it were, died *often*) with this Testimony of Jesus in their mouths, this
Testimony

Testimony (I say) of the Martyrs is confess'd and acknowledged by all the adverse Parties ; no Jew, no Pagan, no Persecutor of Christianity, no Atheist, no Devil, had ever the hardiness to deny what themselves had inflicted, and for what these men had suffered. And all this put together were enough, one would think, to secure the Doctrine of the Resurrection, and by consequence the Christian Faith.

No, It is said, That one man may possibly deceive, or be deceived : If one, then two, then three, then thirty, then thirty thousand, then all the whole Company of Martyrs. Truly 'tis extremely hard to conceive, that in things so gross and palpable, and of highest consequence, any one man of common sense could be impos'd upon, much less deceitfully impose on others, and those that were dearest to him, where he could have no imaginable interest to do so, as it was in this Case of the Primitive martyr'd Christians.

But what if humane Nature might admit of this highest depravation of sense and reason in one single Example ? What if an Heap of Corn being poured out at randome on a large Threshing-Floor, it may happen after many tryals that some of the Grains may fall into
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some regular Figure ; would it follow thence that this whole World of Beauty and Order could have been compos'd by a casual motion of Atoms ? What if a Printers Characters being thrown together at all adventures, it may come to pass after ten hundred thousand essays, that such of the Letters may accidentally meet as may make up the two or three first words of my Text ; yet could it enter into the heart of man to think it possible for them so to be join'd by mere chance, as to make up all this Divine Prophecy of *Hosea* ? or (to put the Case yet higher) to make up all the Sacred Volumes of the Old and New Testament ? To cut the matter short : Can Chance produce effects as wise as any, God can produce ? But if all reason abhors the Atheist's wild supposition, That such blind Causes, as an Heap of Corn, or a Printers Letters, that have no greater tendency one way than another, should produce effects so extravagantly wise by Chance only ; then if we follow the Grain of the same Argument, and pursue it home, it runs more clearly, and ends in a more infallible Conclusion, against the Deists (as they love to style themselves) or the Disbelievers of the Resurrection and Christianity, than against the Atheists.

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For that a World of knowing and rational Beings, or Men, at least, of common sense, that have a natural appetite, an inseparable inclination to their own happiness, (which those inanimate things have not) that all of them could act so extreme unnaturally in an Affair that concerned all their good in this life, as well as in the next, as all of them wilfully to deceive the Children of their own Bowels ; or all of them to be so senselessly negligent, as to suffer themselves to be perpetually abused, when they needed but open their eyes to discover the imposture, if there had been any in these Matters of Fact : this is utterly impossible to conceive, and is really beyond the reach of all imagination. If it be possible (I say *but if* still) if it be possible for any very considering man to debauch his Reason into a real disbelief of the Resurrection, and of those things which *are most surely believed among us*, and upon *many infallible Proofs* (as St. Luke declares) that man can have no reason in the world to conclude there is any thing real : nay, all the reason he has left will rather oblige him to sit down under a wild suspicion that his Life is a waking Dream, that the Heaven and the Earth and all things else about him, are but false representations
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made by some hidden accursed power that is always deluding his fancy, and that there is nothing in the World but the Devil and himself fit Companions for one another.

And having thus discours'd Historically of the Matter of Fact which the Prophet delivers in the Text, I shall now proceed to consider but very briefly of the Myſtery of Faith, the conſequence or effect of theſe great things that Chriſt either did or ſuffered for us; ſo *the power of his Reſurrection* (as St. Paul calls it) is alſo ſet down in theſe words, *He ſhall revive us, He ſhall raiſe us up again, and we ſhall live in his ſight; He ſhall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.*

This Similitude is taken from a thing that is moſt common, that is, *Rain*; and yet this Philoſophical, or at leaſt this Experimental Age will allow me thus much, That the richeſt Notes, and the moſt undoubted Concluſions, in the Book of Nature, are ſuch as we draw from the moſt vulgar, and therefore the moſt conſtant Obſervations. Therefore of all the Similitudes upon which the Divine Prophecies and Parables in the Old and New Teſtament are turn'd and form'd, there are no Compariſons ſo frequently uſed as theſe, between

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the products of Nature, and the growth of Grace; between the Fruits of the Earth, and the encrease of heavenly Vertue and Glory in the humane Soul and Body: no temporal Blessings are so often promis'd, or so constantly perform'd, to put us in mind of the Spiritual, as the sending of the former and the latter rain, the shining of the Sun on the just and on the unjust; the watering the earth, and blessing it, and making it very plenteous. The Church is every where represented as God's Husbandry, as God's Vineyard; and Christ himself is by himself resembled to a Corn of Wheat that fell into the Ground, and dy'd; as if he had said, *The Corn of Wheat, this my Body; the Corn of Wheat which falls into the ground, and dies, this is my Body, which is given and broken for you.* To the same intent and purpose 'tis observable, that the Ceremony of waving the Sheaf of the first-fruit of the Harvest, on the next day after the Feast of the Passover, was appointed in the Law of Moses, as a significant Type of the Resurrection, or of Christ's reviving and raising our mortal Bodies as *His Sheaves* with him; and 'tis yet more observable, that God's peculiar Providence over-ruling the blind Jews to defer their Feast until Saturday, that year when our Saviour suffered, order'd it so, that

that they *wav'd the Sheaf* exactly on the first Easter-morning when Christ arose.

But these effects on our Bodies are not the only or the greatest effects of Christ's Resurrection ; the Power and Wisdom of God in it is greater still, in comparison of this *Wisdom* the Apostle *counted all things no better than dung* ; good only, as that is, to manure the Ground, to prepare it for that good Seed, and for this blessed Rain that should come upon it ; that was all that all the knowledge of the World was good for to those who knew not Christ : But of what consequence now to our Souls, as well as our Bodies, is the Knowledge and Belief of this prime Fundamental Article ? The summ of all this, Because Christ did and suffered all this for us, therefore did God his Father give him by the Holy Spirit a power to raise up himself first, and then all that are *his*, with all manner of Resurrections both of Soul and Body, from all manner of Deaths to which they were obnoxious. Therefore the Scripture in some places uses the word *ἐγανάστασις*, that is, *his full and intire Resurrection* ; the whole 6th of the Romans, and most of the 5th, is upon the force of his Passion and his Resurrection, where 'tis made the Idæal Cause, the very similitude

and pattern of our Resurrection, and, more than so, a vital influence is supposed to be derived from him upon us, to assimilate or make us like him, as well in our Souls as our Bodies; *that as we have been planted together in the likeness of his Death, we shall be also in the likeness of his Resurrection*: For this implanting, viz. in our Baptism, supposes a drawing of Vertue from Christ, and is secur'd on his part to our lives end, there is imply'd not only our Obligation, but our Ability, by the power he gives us, that we also *should walk as he did after this day forty days together in newness of life*; supposing that none can raise their hearts from the World, and be thus renewed, but by *thinking on these things*.

And this falls in with my third and last Part, the Obligation upon our parts, or the Condition imposed upon us, if we mean to reap advantage from this revealed Doctrine of Christ's Resurrection and ours; then must these Principles be pursued extreamly home, and we must go on throughout the whole course of our lives to practise accordingly, *Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord*? For in the very next words to those of my Text, the Prophet takes up this lamentation, *O Ephraim, what shall I do*

I do unto thee ? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee ? For your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away. It seems that these men whom the Prophet had to do with, were men of good intentions ; but so they say, Hell it self is full of good intentions, that is, 'tis full of those that one time or other intended to do well : but here was their great mistake, they thought the great work was done as soon as it was but intended. Alas ! we are apt to take every faint endeavour and every feeble attempt for *overcoming the World*. But then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord ; that is, if we proceed in taking just pains with our selves, till we love what we know, or else we know nothing yet as we ought to know ; *He that loveth not, knoweth not God ; for God is love ; That Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners*, this is not only a faithful saying, but avowed with good reason by the Apostle *to be worthy of all men to be received* : but every thing in Nature is received according to the capacity and figure of the worthy or unworthy Receiver. Our Christian Philosophy ! 'tis a most noble speculation ! Angels delight to pry into it ! Unbelievers themselves will acknowledge in their sober moods, that our main Body of Divinity is a piece of magnificent Wit,

Wit, admirably refin'd, and strongly knit together : But because they want a soul for it, to ponder and contemplate these great and amazing Truths, till they come to practise as they ought ; therefore the *men love darkness rather than light*, not that Religion has any blind sides in it, for *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*, but *because their deeds are evil, and every one that doth evil hates the light*. One of themselves, a great one, has confess'd the only reason why men have so little controverted or contradicted the Principles of some other Sciences, by which we build Houses or measure Fields, 'tis because (says he) these Principles do not cross our Appetites : Be that famous Proposition in *Euclid* true or false, for which *Pythagoras* offered an hundred Oxen in thanks to Heaven for helping him to find and demonstrate it, they need not sacrifice one vile affection for it ; and yet even those Principles that are as plain as two and two is four, have been gainsaid : But then it was for some interest ; it was in hopes of founding a speculative Atheism (for the sake of a practical one you may be sure ; of founding it, I say) more strongly upon Scepticism, to the utter contempt of humane Nature ; baffling all sense and reason, granting just nothing
for

for fear of allowing some truth, lest then some Notions of good and evil should have follow'd upon it. But to shew 'tis the inordination of mens affections that causes the evil heart of unbelief to depart from the living God, instead of following on to know the Lord: What was it else but the old leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadduces, that converted Christs Manna into Gall? that turned the very Bread that came down from Heaven into that which perish'd with them? For when the people saw him multiply the Loaves, they were ready to follow him for those; not only to satisfy their hunger, but their ambition: for presently they apprehended he that was able to make such extemporary provision for a multitude, had it in his power to maintain and defray an Army upon easie terms. Whereupon 'tis very observable in the next Chapter, after the relation of this Miracle, *they would have taken him by force to make him King*; intending him, no question, for their General against the Romans that oppress'd them; so that he was fain to avoid their irresistible importunities of accepting a Crown, by retiring up into a Mountain with his Disciples: But when they saw him resolv'd to be a man of retirement, when they saw him bent upon it, not to serve turns and their politick Ends, not

to head their rebellious designs against their Roman Masters, nor to cherish their aspiring thoughts for Universal Monarchy; then *say we not well, That thou art a Samaritan, and hast a Devil?* But after all the dirt and contempt they had thrown upon him; yet if at any time they took a fancy from some powerful action of his, that he was breaking out in a blaze of State and Splendor, straight they began again to worship him as the rising Sun, then they resounded *Hosannahs, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord*; then He was *the Son of David, and Messiah the Prince, the Heir of the Crown*, while they had any hopes and expectations that *the Kingdom of God* (as they call'd it) *should immediately appear*. But then again when they found themselves disappointed by his repeated Declarations, *That his Kingdom was not of this World*, they soon return'd to their old pass, *We have no King but Cæsar, He that maketh himself a King* (when they would have made him so) *speaketh against Cæsar*: Nay, to instance in better men; His own Disciples themselves, till the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon them had subdued their affections, they were but *men of like affections with us*, their passions clouded their reason, they had some venial

nial doubtings and failings too, they deserv'd sometimes to be censured by their Great Master and ours for *men of but little faith*. But all their want of affiance proceeded not from want of evidence in the thing it self, *That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have lookt upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life, that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you*: Did these good men want Proofs of the Resurrection? It was proved to all their senses, and yet *some doubted*; because they did not see him in a triumphal Chariot: for to the last hour of his stay upon Earth, and immediately before his ascension into Heaven, they never lost that ambition, which made them say, *Wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom unto Israel*? But the former Contest among themselves which of them should be the greatest, had like to have made St. Peter himself no Christian; as those that call themselves the Successors of St. Peter have almost turn'd the Christian World upside down with the same unhappy Contest about Supremacy, so early begun in the Church, they forget what a sharp rebuke it brought upon St. Peter, *Get thee behind me Satan*; for he tempted our Saviour, as did the Devil before him, to think of the Kingdoms

of this World, and the Glories of them, rather than speak of suffering at Jerusalem; for which his Master gave him fair warning to look to himself, and his own deceitful heart, For thou savourest not the things of God, but those that are of men. 'Tis still the scandal they take at the Doctrine of the Cross of Christ, or rather at the Duty of taking up the Cross themselves, that hinders the whole Jewish Nation, which knows so much of these Prophecies, from following on to know the Lord. But it was on the other side a very remarkable Proof, that *they who do his will shall know of his Doctrine*, that when the Pharisees, with their overweening pride and ambition, stood out against all conviction that Christ himself could afford them, when the Sadduces deny'd the Immortality of the Soul, because they rather wish'd the Immortality of the Body and its fleshly Lusts; the *Essenes*, another Sect among the Jews, whom we do not find any where reprehended by our Saviour; for they were honest and humble men of heart; they liv'd much within themselves, and had little to do with the World; these flock'd apace into the Church, (as the Church-Histories inform us) and, for receiving the good Seed, these proved the best Ground in all the Land of Promise.

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The Sower, that is, the Preacher, could he be sure he were enter'd upon such Ground, he might afford to do as *Moses* was bidden to do, and *put off his shoes from his feet* in reverence to it; Who is there that would not willingly go barefoot all the days of his life, on condition the place whereon he took his standing were always such holy Ground? But how shall we become such? My Answer is still the same, *Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord*; and our Saviour himself has told us, *That the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.* Which that we may all do, I shall conclude with the Apostle's excellent Prayer: *Now the God of peace, who did bring again from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Testament, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory for ever and ever.* Amen.